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W. R. HEARST.

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WEATHER FOR TO-DAY.—Probably cloudy; warmer; northerly winds, becoming variable.

TAXES AND RENTS.

the statement.

Our taxes are too high, and the landlords put it in your rent. Taxes are high because the business of the city has been badly carried on; because from top to bottom it has been full of jobbery.

Dr. Rainsford did not explain how this theory could be made to agree with his other allegation that rents were cheaper in the fashionable quarters than in the tenement districts. High taxes pervade all parts of the city alike, and if they always mean high rents, then rents should be equally affected by them on Cherry Hill and on Fifth avenue. The truth is that taxes affect only one element of rent, and that element is one which is more conspicuous in the richer than in the poorer quarters of the town. A tax on improvements may be shifted to the tenants, because it tends to discourage building. Money will not be invested in new buildings without some prospect of the ordinary net returns on capital. But taxes on land cannot be shifted, because they do not tend to reduce the amount of land in the market, but rather to increase it. The landlords naturally collect just as large rents as they can get at any time, whether they are taxed low or high. They do not ask their tenants how much they can afford to pay, and the tenants do not ask how little the landlords can afford to accept. It is simply a matter of the number of people desiring lots in given locations as compared with the number of such lots to be had. As the value of improvements is comparatively small in the poorer districts, the landlords bear a greater proportion of the taxes there than they do in the districts in which rents are governed more largely by the amount of capital seeking investment in buildings. Workmen are deeply interested in seeing the city get full value for all the money it spends, but they are not so much interested in having the total expenses kept small—which is a fortunate thing for the reformers who are responsible for the present tax levy.

CORPORATIONS AND CUSTOMERS.

Ex-Mayor Hugh J. Grant, in his communication to the Journal with reference to the public ownership of railroads and gas works, left a link missing from his logical chain. "I do not think it would be conducive to the interest of the public," he said, "to have the municipal government itself owning franchises of either railroads or gas works. Under private ownership they can be conducted much more economically, and they are able to give better service at less price."

It is not certain that all enterprises can be conducted more economically under private than under public ownership, but if it were, the question would still remain whether the benefit of these economies went to the people or to somebody else. Possibly corporations may be "able to give better service at less price" than public agencies, but do they do it? How does the New Yorker, for instance, who buys his gas from a private company at \$1.25 per thousand feet compare with the resident of Glasgow who buys his from a municipal plant at 56 cents? The government of New York under Tammany was not considered ideal, but the public water works of this city under that regime supplied consumers at about half the price charged by a corporation in San Francisco. The national post office is accused of extravagance, and it is said that private enterprise could reduce its expenses by one half, but the post office will perform services for a cent which no express company would perform for less than fifteen.

There is considerable difference between being able to do a thing and doing it. The Standard Oil Trust is able to reduce the price of oil, but it prefers to increase the fund available for Mr. Rockefeller's philanthropies. The Sultan of Turkey is able to stop the Armenian massacres, but it suits him to have them go on. When Mr. Grant discusses the question of public versus private agencies again he should not be satisfied with convincing himself that corporations can do work more economically to themselves than municipalities can; he should find out whether their services are more economical to their customers.

WOMEN AND CROWDS.

One hears much complaining these days about the crowds that visit the big stores. The men and women who are prepared to give positive judgments upon all questions that vex mortal souls have declaimed and written voluminously upon the subject. Listen to them and you will imagine that all the women of New York are rushing to early graves through the crowded aisles of the dry goods stores. They will tell you that smiles have been banished from the faces of shoppers, to be replaced, as one enthusiastic female censor puts it, by "rasping, contorted expressions" and "frowns of discontent and displeasure."

But how different is the story told by the shoppers themselves! See them in the heat of the chase, observe the enthusiasm which lights their faces, mark the smiles of triumph which indicate their success in the animated stories of their experiences. No fox hunter ever waxed more eloquent in describing his conquest of the brush than does the shopper in telling how she secured the eagerly sought bargain, and the blood of the one is as thoroughly stirred by the chase as is that of the other. It is absurd to suggest that the women of New York are given to pursuits that destroy either health or beauty. Shopping affords them delightful exhilaration and excellent exercise, and the veteran shoppers are alert, vigorous and level-headed.

The wide-awake merchant knows that the average woman loves a crowd, and he aims to give his store the appearance of being crowded, even when trade is dull. An empty store is avoided by women as if it were a plague spot, while a crowd attracts her just as it does the busy brokers of Wall Street, who are curious enough to stop in the midst of weighty business to peer over the shoulders of office boys gathered around a fallen horse. It is because the merchant understands human nature that he knows how to arouse the curiosity that is one of its characteristics. When shoppers are few he places his most attractive wares at the main entrances, where the knowing shoppers will pounce upon them. These attract the idle passers, and soon a crowd forms. Presently those in the rear, unable to get near the counters, move on to give animation to the deserted aisles, and thus the merchant's object is obtained.

Emile Zola, the great French realist, spent months in studying the operations of a great department store in Paris, and in the novel he based upon his observations he continually dwelt upon the need of crowds to make business success. Speaking of his hero, the manager of a great department store, he said:

"He laid down as a law that not a corner of the Ladies'

Paradise ought to remain deserted, requiring everywhere a noise, a crowd, evidence of life; for life, said he, attracts life, increases and multiplies."

There is a store in Chicago in which, it is alleged, the crowds are habitually so great that visitors have been carried from entrance to exit without once getting near the counters. Of course, that is overdoing the thing, but everybody knows that Chicagoans are unnecessarily energetic. Our crowds are neither so fierce nor so cruel. There are dry goods stores also in which crowds and noise do not exist. Their owners are conservative, and cater to ladies with extra sensitive nerves—the sort that shrink from contact with fellow passengers in a street car. These stores are necessary to a metropolis having in its enormous population citizens with no more serious occupation than the destruction of time and money. But the merchants who have their fingers on the pulses of the people and who are successful because they respond to the popular demand are the other kind, and it is in their stores that one obtains a truthful picture of the active, independent, vigorous, excitement-loving, typical New York woman.

ARE WE TO HAVE A CUBAN POLICY?

The Administration is allowing it to be understood that it is arranging for an energetic forward move—in fact, that it is preparing for a decisive intervention to end the war. The public is willing to give Mr. McKinley the benefit of every doubt, but it remembers dubiously that Mr. Cleveland used to circulate stories of the same kind when he had "Congress on his hands," and that he was accustomed to drop Cuba with glib glee as soon as Congress dispersed.

It is said that the President's plan is to guarantee the payment of an indemnity to Spain in consideration of her withdrawal from the island. An "indemnity" sounds better than a purchase, and it might readily be represented to the intelligent natives of the Iberian peninsula as a tribute to their military prowess. Germany collected an indemnity from France and evacuated the country when it was paid—why should not Spain do the same thing with Cuba? Such reasoning might conceivably satisfy the proud and haughty race whose honor is outraged by the thought of a commercial transaction. It is asserted that the Spanish Government is disposed to accept this solution of its problem.

On the other hand all the advice from Madrid indicates that the Spanish authorities are as stubborn as ever in their refusal to yield an inch to the pressure of the United States. They will make no concessions whatever to foreign demands in a matter which they affect to regard as the exclusive concern of Spain. Of course, if this attitude be persisted in it will make an amicable outcome of the difficulty impossible, and President McKinley will be compelled to speak in terms that cannot be misunderstood. In this country the Cuban question is regarded as much more an American than a Spanish matter, and even Mr. Cleveland admitted in his last message that the savage devastation of the island could not be allowed to continue indefinitely.

ANOTHER SUGAR INQUIRY.

Senator Tillman has promptly taken up the challenge contained in Justice Bradley's order directing the acquittal of Havemeyer. He has introduced in the Senate a resolution providing for the appointment of a committee of five, "with power to send for persons and papers, to employ a stenographer, and to administer oaths, to inquire into the truth or falsehood of the charges made in May, 1894, and into the charges recently made, and the scope of the investigation shall cover everything embraced in the resolution of May 17, 1894, as well as the methods pursued by the American Sugar Refining Company, better known as the Sugar Trust, in controlling legislation in its favor at the present time; and especially whether it has in any wise contributed to, or controlled, the election of a Senator in this body at any time."

Mr. Tillman is not noted for urbanity or self-restraint, and he supplemented his proposal with a few rasping remarks that brought the whole swarm of sugar Senators about his head like bees stirred up by a stick in their hive. The resolution was promptly referred to the Committee on Contingent Expenses, which is expected to look it carefully in a safe deposit vault where it will be in no danger of exposure to the air.

This disposition to shun publicity is not a thing to be encouraged. Mr. Tillman may not be popular among his associates, but that should not lead them to rest quietly under an imputation on their own honor. The Senate is under deep and well deserved suspicion. The manipulation of the sugar schedules in the tariffs of 1890, 1894 and 1897, which are the only ones framed since the creation of the trust, has manifestly not been the work of disinterested patriotism. Senator Aldrich announced yesterday that he and every member of the sub-committee "courted the fullest investigation of their acts while considering the Tariff bill." That is the right spirit, and we hope that Mr. Aldrich and his associates will prove their sincerity by insisting upon the prompt adoption of the Tillman resolution. The matter cannot be left in its present position. The people have two things to think about now—they not only want to know the truth about speculating Senators, but they want to know whether the Senate has the power to compel Mr. Havemeyer to answer questions or go to jail. It will not be well for the Senate to disappoint them.

The objection to the expensive and flashy manner in which General Miles is proceeding from point to point is ill-timed. General Miles should be permitted to go ahead and impress the foreigners with the fact that he is representing one of the most prosperous nations on the face of the globe.

In his inaugural address President McKinley made a very flattering mention of Congress, and intimated strongly that he would have no objection to having it on his hands. Congress has accepted the invitation, and it would be interesting to know just how the President is enjoying himself.

It was quite thoughtful in the Nashville people to invite the King of Greece to their exposition, but owing to the boresness of Edhem Pasha the King of Greece is not the drawing card he was when the invitation was issued.

Ex-Ambassador Eustis doesn't think well of the late arbitration treaty, and doesn't hesitate to say so. Mr. Eustis is a trifle late, but it will be remembered that he has recently been released from the diplomatic stocks.

Senator Cullom has introduced a large batch of amendments to the Interstate Commerce law. Owing to the activity of the Supreme Court Mr. Cullom finds it difficult to keep his legislative child properly clothed.

With General Miles, John W. Foster, the Blountville Commissioners and other officials abroad, it cannot be claimed the Government Summer excursion season is not opening auspiciously.

A Kentucky Judge has decided that a mosquito bite is an accident. It might be well to know just what Kentucky legal minds think of snake bites and their old-fashioned treatment.

It will be rather difficult for Mr. Platt to thoroughly exploit the wickedness of Tammany as long as the present commotion in his own back yard continues.

We infer from the remarks of Senator Aldrich that he regards the Sugar Trust as one of the moral pillars of the Government.

Mr. Platt will find Hon. "Jake" Woeth a rather troublesome "pacifist."

Muscle, Brains and Hospitality.

UNIVERSITY Athletic Club chaplains did themselves proud last night in tendering a reception to Mr. Lehmann, the English coach of the Harvard crew.

The membership of this institution is culled from the alumni of all American universities, but when it comes to a recognition of athletic work and athletic wisdom there is never a dissenting voice in the University Athletic Club.

Like the University Club, from which it sprang, it is conducted on broad lines, by intelligent gentlemen, and is bound to succeed.

The reception to Mr. Lehmann is only another evidence of its liberal policy.

Bagby, old chap, announces with some blare of trumpets, that he has abandoned his bagpipes and gone into business.

He has given up his morning muscades at the Waldorf and turned his talents to mining, or something else, in Wall Street, that promises equally well.

Although I haven't much confidence in Wall Street mining schemes, I hope that Bagby will succeed. He is an enterprising and adhesive little chap and deserves to make money.

Bagby's retirement from the Waldorf musical field leaves that doubtful source of riches to the monopolistic grasp of Clarence Andrews, of the Union Club.

Mr. and Mrs. Killen Van Rensselaer have gone to their Seabright cottage for June, but contemplate visiting other resorts during the bathing season.

This is not because the bathing at Seabright is inferior to that of other fashionable seaside places.

On the contrary, the bathing at Seabright is so unusually good that it attracts the best swimmers from New York and elsewhere.

Among these are Hermann Oelrichs and Nicola Tesla, both of whom are amphibious. They swim far out to sea and spend whole stretches of hours in the water.

This irritates Mr. Van Rensselaer. He has a theory that such bold adventures as Messrs. Oelrichs and Tesla are certain to attract sharks in their own sea excursions, and that some day all the women and children and old men that dabble in the breakers of Seabright will be annihilated by a school of man-eaters chasing Oelrichs and Tesla ashore.

By going to other resorts where the swimmers are not so reckless Mr. Van Rensselaer will avoid so sickening a spectacle.

An enterprising dime museum manager has offered an alleged nephew of Uncle Russell Sage a comfortable salary to come and sit as an exhibit in his collection of curiosities.

If this purveyor of freaks knew his business he wouldn't waste time on the nephew when he might get a far better drawing card right here at home. He might have to give up the entire receipts, but the advertisement would be worth it.

There will be more fun at Morris Park to-day.

Louis Haight, George Eustis and Craig Wadsworth, and possibly Fozie Keene, are going to ride for the Amateur Cup, and all the sports set will be there to witness a contest that is likely to be quite as grotesque but not nearly so dangerous as the absurd Hunt Steeplechase of Thursday.

Another "feature" of the day will be the settlement of the important question as to who shall own the beautiful but somewhat corpulent silver image of the president of the Jockey Club.

I never fully realized the joy of winning the Belmont Stakes until I saw that trophy.

Sir Tatton Sykes, who recently returned to England after a short stay in this country, is the husband of the sister of Cavendish Bentinck, who married the twin sister of Mrs. Ogden Mills.

Lady Tatton Sykes paid a visit to New York a few years ago, and the Four Hundred prepared to receive her with open arms.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Willis James started the welcome with a grand dinner in honor of her ladyship. Everything went along swimmingly until the end of the feast was nearly reached, when something happened that caused the round of pleasures that had been planned for Lady Tatton Sykes to be abandoned in some instances and curtailed in others.

Sir Tatton Sykes advertised in the English papers not long ago that he would not be longer responsible for debts contracted by his wife.

Cornelius Vanderbilt rather scraped the veneer off William Waldorf Astor's philanthropy when he gave \$5,000 to the proposed American Victoria memorial, a charity to which "Willie Wallie" had subscribed only \$100.

Willie Wallie's contribution would have been larger in all probability if the word American hadn't been tacked on to the memorial.

The fact that the Cornelius Vanderbilts are coming back to America at the end of July, and will open "The Breakers," at Newport, has led some enthusiasts to declare that Mr. Vanderbilt is well on the way to recovery.

I hope sincerely that they may not be mistaken in their conclusions.

With Louis Wormser, Johnnie "Pleasant" Shultz, "Purr" Collier and Regie Rives representing New York at the Philadelphia Horse Show, we may be pardoned for alluding to the fact with some show of pride.

And who are Mr. and Mrs. George Gagnon that are also accredited to Gotham? Can this "Mr." Gagnon be my erudite, opulent and skilful friend, "Doctor" Gagnon, who formerly toured the West with four white horses and a brass band in a philanthropic effort to extract aching molars, and subsequently came East to paralyze Long Branch with his style and capture an heiress with his accomplishments?

There is only one thing that makes me doubt—Gagnon was too proud of the title of "Dr." to drop it for a commonplace "Mr."

We live and learn. An evening contemporary states that the Marquis de La Roche, who was driving yesterday in a black frock coat, light gray trousers and black derby hat.

Has Mr. J. Waldere Kirk gone into afternoon journalism?

To marry an heiress in these days is to be advertised throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Mr. Larz Anderson will become as famous as the late Phineas T. Barnum if his marriage to Miss Perkins and her millions is not soon solemnized.

CHOLLY KNICKERBOCKER.

Should the City Own Railroads and Gas Works?

More Arguments on Both Sides of the Interesting Question of Municipal Control of Quasi-Public Concerns.

WHEREIN SUCCESS WOULD LIE.

To the Editor:

I see no reason, if you have a thoroughly efficient, economical administration of the ferries, markets, water and sewer branches of the public service under our present system—imperfect as it is—why you could not extend the same system so as to cover another department, such as management of a street railroad. The income from the Water Board is sufficient to pay all their running expenses and to yield quite a large revenue to the city.

The two contentions offered against municipal ownership and operation of the franchises are, that if you add more offices for the politicians to gobble up, injury will ensue to the community, and that if the city were controlling these franchises they would not pay—money would be lost on them.

It seems to me the whole secret of the success of municipal administration will be in securing trained and capable men. The public is being gradually educated up to see the necessity for putting a man like Colonel Waring in charge of the street cleaning, and putting men in charge of other departments who, like him, have some technical knowledge of the work to be done. They are coming around to abandon the old theory that a "business man," a man who has been the president of a bank, or who has made a fortune on the Produce Exchange, possesses any special qualifications for managing a department like that of the schools, parks, charities, or public works.

In no other city in the world, I imagine, by the way, would such an absurdity be tolerated as a legislative enactment that no medical man can be president of its Board of Health, or would be approved the taking of a mere business man for such a position. The Massachusetts and Michigan State Boards of Health have gained a world-wide reputation under the direction of medical men. The Health Officer of Brooklyn is a physician, and the Health Officer of New York should be a medical man.

Furthermore, if the men in charge of city departments were truly representative of the interests and wishes of the mass of the people, it would naturally give much better satisfaction, and the great mistake, as I feel it, of the "reform" administration lies in the fact that the appointees of all the departments under it have been persons who represented but one class, while the great mass of the people, particularly the workmen, have felt that they had no representation. CHARLES F. WINGATE.

CITY SHOULD GRADUALLY SECURE THE ROADS.

To the Editor:

In a general way I am in favor of the gradual acquisition of public franchises by the municipalities. I should begin in this city by taking the Sixth and Eighth avenue lines, which I do not doubt can be got. Despite the opinion of the Court to the contrary, we can find means for getting them. It does not follow that because they cannot be got in one way they cannot be got in another. There is a general law which applies to that case which has thus far been overlooked. The terms might be a little different, but they can be got one way or another. Then, after that, I should begin by gradually taking up other franchises—eventually, the gas companies—but I should not move too rapidly with this, simply because I think the municipalities, New York and Brooklyn, are not yet sufficiently organized in their methods of administration to make it safe to overload the public officials very much at one time. But the example of the docks, which have been taken gradually under the city administration, shows the thing can be done and ought to be done.

All the property that is invested should be properly paid for, but I do not think that the mere franchises, which were given away for nothing, should be counted a great deal. Some allowance should be made for them, perhaps, but not their present exaggerated value.

I am not in the abstract very much in favor of the municipalities managing these things, because I think that if we could have an honest and fearless government, a really larger revenue could be obtained from them by taking the value of the franchises than would be obtained through the direct administration of their affairs. But it seems impossible to avoid the corruption of municipal bodies by these corporations so long as affairs are left in their hands, and, of course, they would fight desperately against the municipalization of their property. I believe that it would be much easier to hold the politicians to the public interests on that issue than it would be to induce them to act honestly so long as they leave these matters in the hands of private corporations and only pretend to bargain with them for the public revenue. In such a transaction the public is constantly cheated and robbed.

So, in brief, my view is that these various franchises should be gradually and not too rapidly taken in charge by the municipalities. THOMAS G. SHEARMAN.

PRESIDENT VREELAND ON MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.

To the Editor:

I am asked, "Should municipalities own local franchises?" and "Are you in favor of such ownership?" If you mean, am I in favor of the management and operation of these franchises by public officials, I answer, I am not. If you mean, am I in favor of getting the largest return for the public treasury, I say, I am.

I have noticed that there is considerable confusion in the discussion of this question, based, no doubt, on misinformation. Let us take, for example, the history of a railway franchise under the law as it now stands. Public necessity demands that there shall be a railroad on a route where none now exists. Application is made to the municipal authorities to grant a franchise to operate such a road. Thereupon the franchise is publicly advertised for sale at auction to the highest bidder. The bidding is free to the whole world; the price paid is a percentage of the gross receipts, and this secures to the municipality not only the present market value of the franchise, but an increasing revenue as the property develops in earning capacity.

Some of the gentlemen who have discussed this subject are either ignorant of this fact or have intentionally ignored it. No fairer method than this, it seems to me, could be devised. The sale is advertised for weeks before it takes place, and the competition has of late been so keen that the percentages secured to the municipalities have been so large as to allow only a small margin of profit on the capital invested in the improvements. The assumption that the city gets no adequate revenue for the franchises it sells at public auction is not justified by the facts of recent railroad history.

In the early history of the efforts to establish street surface railroads in New York City and elsewhere, what seems now to be a great liberality was extended by the municipalities to the original promoters. But it must be borne in mind that these early efforts to establish railroads in cities were not viewed with favor by the capitalists of the times, and those who had the hardihood and enterprise to embark in them were regarded as visionaries. It is an interesting fact in the history of some of the roads in the city of New York, not generally known, that part of their capital stock was paid at 25 per cent of its face value for feed for horses, and this was accepted solely for the reason that nothing else was available. There seems to be an inclination, in some quarters, in discussing this question, to harp on the conditions of these primitive grants and ignore the present highly conservative method of dealing with franchises. This is both unjust and misleading.

The Board of Aldermen recently passed a resolution demanding that the Comptroller furnish the Board with a statement of the amount of taxes paid by the various railroads in the city of New York, and the Comptroller furnished it with the following table, which goes far to dispel the industriously circulated report that the public treasury is not receiving revenue from the operation of franchises at the present time. The table shows the amounts paid during the year 1896 by the Metropolitan Street Railway Company and the Metropolitan Traction Company:

(City Taxes.)	Metropolitan Co.
Percentage of receipts.....	\$45,101.93
Fixed rental.....	50,000.00
Car license.....	40,280.00
Personal tax.....	39,114.47
Tax on real estate.....	112,607.30
Track taxes.....	54,489.75
(State Taxes.)	
Percentage of earnings.....	99,000.00
On capital stock of Street Railway Company.....	20,000.00
On capital stock Traction Company.....	42,000.00
Total.....	\$501,593.25

The city received a large proportion of those sums stated in the last three items through the State Board of Equalization.

As to those who believe that public franchises should be operated by public officials, I entirely agree with what Mr. J. Haysen Rhodes has said on the subject, but for entirely different reasons. He has discussed the political bearings of this method, about which he knows more than I do. My objection is based upon the business experience of those cities which have undertaken to operate street railroads.

The city of Birmingham, one of the most progressive and best governed cities in Great Britain, and with large experience in the matter of municipal ownership, decided at a meeting of its City Council in July, 1896, after a very careful discussion upon the report of the Public Works Committee, to extend the present lease of the railroads there for a period of twenty-one years to a syndicate of gentlemen from Montreal and Toronto.

The experience of the city of Glasgow, which is frequently quoted, seems to be entirely misunderstood. Its experience has frequently been quoted as an instance of the economy of municipal management. This misunderstanding largely arises from the publication, without comment, of the following table, showing the amount paid to the "Common Good," or General Municipal Treasurer, between the years 1894 and 1896. This table shows:

Paid by lessees for 1894.....	\$28,300
By Street Railway Department for 1895.....	41,300
By Street Railway Department for 1896.....	45,000

In other words, the municipality received \$116,700 more in 1896 from its own operation than it received in 1894 from the lessees, but in 1894 the municipality had invested in the property only \$717,475, and in 1896 it had \$2,582,780.

Huddersfield and Leeds have been referred to as cities which own and successfully operate their own plants. Huddersfield acquired the street railroad property in 1891, and up to 1896 it had just about paid the interest at less than 3 per cent of the investment since the acquisition. In one year a tax of 2½ per cent was added to the general tax to help pay the deficiency of the Street Railway Department.

Leeds acquired the ownership of the tracks of its street railway company in 1894. It is too soon to look for results as to this experiment, but Mr. Sullivan, of Massachusetts, who has investigated this subject, says that he hopes the municipality will succeed better than the late stockholders, who lost \$382,005 out of an investment of \$800,000 in the same property.

If it is proposed to acquire those franchises already disposed of, this is another question. The municipality can do this only by condemnation proceedings, as the Court of Appeals held in the Broadway case that the value of a franchise and good will was an asset of the corporation, to be treated as property just as much as rails and cars. Under these conditions, it would be necessary for the city to pay for these franchises, heretofore disposed of to railway companies alone, about \$150,000,000.

H. H. VREELAND,
President Metropolitan Street Railroad Company.

Spanish Honor On Sale in Cuba.

WE are hearing from Madrid again about Spanish honor and the incapacity of the prosaic American mind to understand the proud Latin sense of dignity which makes the sale of Cuba impossible.

We shall get a line on the Spanish superiority to pecuniary temptation should a reasonable cash offer for the island be made, payment being secured by an American guaranty. Spain has sold large quantities of her sacred territory to us before.

If the Spaniard in Spain scorns money, as he asks us to believe by cable, then he undergoes a magic sea change in the voyage to Cuba. In March last I was a passenger on the Ward line steamer Niagara and stayed by the ship while she remained in Cuban waters, going ashore at the ports where she touched. What I saw and what I was told by the well-informed forbade me to doubt that the average Spaniard in the service of his country will sell anything he can find a market for, including his honor.

The corruption in the customs service is so open and so gross, so pervading, as to astound the American. The shamelessness of the cheating betokens a rottenness that is chronic—a matter of course in villainy that can come only by generations of usage.

At Guantanamo, to illustrate, I saw hundreds of barrels of flour, on which there is a high duty, invoiced and landed as fire clay, on which there is a small duty, or none. Every barrel was marked with the stencils of the American mill from which it came, and the handling from ship to lighter caused flour to squeeze from between the staves, but that made no difference to the Spanish customs officers who oversaw the transfer. There was no pretence of concealment, no fear of observation. It was merely the customary thing. Had I been interested enough I could have obtained without trouble proof of the fraud of the invoice followed the flour ashore and sent it delivered to the consignee as fire clay. If I, a chance stranger, could do this, why not a Spanish agent? There are any desire for honesty left in the race or the Government?

At Santiago coffee was landed as beans, for the same reason that flour became fire clay at Guantanamo. At Cienfuegos identical swindling went on. The invoice seldom tells the truth about shippable goods shipped into Cuba.

Seeing what I saw, I could not doubt the veracity of the statement made to me by an American long resident in Cuba.

"If," he said, "you should go into trade here and begin by honestly invoicing your imports and paying the high duty, you would at once receive a visit of expostulation from the Collector of the Port. You would be regarded either as a fool or an anarchist bent on defying venerable customs and breaking up business in Cuba. Every million dollars collected at the custom houses which goes into the Spanish treasury represents two other millions stolen. The scale of division is about this: You import a lot of goods on which the duty amounts to \$1,200; you pay \$300, which leaves you \$900 ahead; the customs officers keep \$400 and the Government, if in luck, gets the remaining \$500."

Another American with large interests in Cuba said to me: "Most of us with property here want the insurgents to lose. We know what to expect from the Spaniards, but don't know how it would be under a republic. This is a bonanza country. In time of peace we make enormous profits from our plantations and commerce. The Spanish Government is frightfully rotten and rapacious, but we can afford to pay the bribes."

"Everybody here is on the make. The officers don't want the war to end. The pay of the army and navy is double during the war, and there is always a likelihood of chances, besides. You must have been struck by seeing so many Spanish men-of-war in the harbors instead of the coast of patrolling the coast. Well, that's business. Every few days one will steam up and go out to sea for a day or so. Before that happens there is a little transaction with the coal dealers. Five or ten tons will be delivered on board, and the Government will get a bill for a hundred tons. It runs all through the service about and ashore. If you want to go through the lines to visit the rebels, a 20-cent piece or a small bribe will do instead of the countersign and a pass."

"We'd give about half we've got for the island to be annexed by the United States, for the other half would be worth more than the whole is under Spanish rule. But we're afraid of a Cuban republic. It might be worse for us than the Spanish system, rotten as it is."

Seeing what I saw, and learning what I learned from resident Americans, I left Cuba disappointed that I had the resources of money they could go aboard the war ships and buy the Spanish navy from its officers. The honor of Spain, when it comes to